2003

Florida A&M University College of Law Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 1

FAMU College of Law

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From the Dean’s Desk

The College of Law, now entering its second year, welcomes a new class, new faculty members, and congratulates the Inaugural Class on its accomplishments during our first year.

In addition, this fall we will have our first visit from the American Bar Association accreditation group. Faculty and administrators are working on our documentation and preparing for the visit.

Our campaign for the law school is underway. The funds raised will support the construction of our new facility; endow the clinical program and a scholarship fund for deserving students; and fund faculty development.

A successful campaign will help us continue to recruit and retain superb faculty and outstanding students. In addition, the campaign will enable us to support the programs that will help us meet our missions of enhancing the opportunity for minorities to enter the legal profession; providing an affordable and quality legal education program; and linking the community, the legal profession, and public service entities through clinical programs.

To those ends, we have hired six new faculty members, all of whom are introduced inside this newsletter.

Another challenge we face is reconnecting with alumni from the original FAMU College of Law. One of our goals is to carry on the high standards set by the law school’s earlier graduates and include them in our events and endeavors.

Join us as we face an exciting and challenging year!

New FAMU College of Law Campus

Prepare to join us for a preview of the new College of Law campus in the Parramore neighborhood in downtown Orlando. College of Law alumni, supporters and friends will be invited to a preview of the site on September 30, 2003.

The new campus is due to open in the fall of 2005. The campus will include classrooms; a law library; a law clinic; moot courtrooms; faculty, student, and administrative offices; and areas for student services and public events. Rhodes + Brito Architects are completing design work on the 100,000-plus square-foot facility. The campus will be on Hughey Avenue between Washington and Robinson streets.
College Welcomes New Faculty

Six professors join the College of Law for the 2003-2004 year. They have had distinguished legal careers and add important expertise to the faculty. The new faculty members are:

Barbara L. Bernier was a professor at the Roger Williams University School of Law in Rhode Island. She has expertise in Women and the Law, International Law and Human Rights.

Hastings Jones, a FAMU alumna, held positions in public defender service in Washington, D.C., most recently as deputy chief of the special litigation division. His areas of expertise are Criminal Law and Juvenile Law.

James W. Smith, III, was Senior Prosecutor with the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, U.S. Army Military District of Washington, D.C. His areas of expertise are Military Law, Criminal Law, International Law and Tax Law.

Phyllis C. Smith, a FAMU alumna, practiced as a general law attorney with the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Army Materiel Command in Alexandria, Virginia. Her areas of expertise include Criminal Law, Claims, and Tax Law.

Robert Thompson is a former patent attorney with the Xerox Corporation in Rochester, New York. His areas of expertise include Patents, Intellectual Property, and Commercial Transactions.

Virginia Bullerman Townes is a shareholder in the litigation practice group of Akerman, Senterfitt. Her areas of expertise include Banking Regulatory and Consumer Lending Litigation, Intellectual Property, Labor Law, Appellate Law, and Business Disputes.

The new faculty will join existing faculty, including: Joan R. Bullock, professor; Frederick Dennis Greene, professor; John G. Harper, assistant professor; Bill Henslee, associate professor; Frederick B. Jonassen, assistant professor; John Paul Jones, professor; Lundy R. Langston, professor; Debi McRae, assistant professor; Grace M. Mills, associate professor and director of law library; Omar Saleem, associate dean for academic affairs and professor; Ruth A. Witherspoon, associate dean for administration and student services and associate professor.

All faculty will be profiled in our upcoming faculty directory.

Snapshot of the 2003 Entering Class

The College of Law will welcome first-year students at orientation August 16 - 22. Applications for the 2003 - 2004 entering class were up by nearly 50 percent over last year and interest in the law school continues to build. The incoming class is a talented group of students who will become distinguished members of the profession. The diverse class fulfills the law school’s mission to enhance opportunities for minorities to enter the legal profession and provide an affordable and quality legal education program.

Women comprise 62 percent of the class and 51 percent of the students are from minority groups. There are 89 Full-time Day students and 41 Part-time Evening students. The entering class includes nurses, engineers, teachers, and entrepreneurs.

When the new facility opens in 2005, first-year enrollment will increase to 150 Full-time Day students and up to 75 Part-Time Evening students.

College Grows Into Expanded Quarters

To accommodate its exploding growth, the College of Law has received approval from Orange County to move into the remaining three floors of its temporary quarters at One North Orange Avenue. Very soon, the College of Law will occupy all 10 floors of the historic building, providing the increasing numbers of students, faculty and staff with space on the eighth, ninth and tenth floors. The renovated areas will be used for more classrooms, faculty offices, and an additional law library circulation desk, study area, and computer lab.
Florida Supreme Court Justice Honored

Legal luminaries gathered May 30, 2003 to honor retired Justice Leander J. Shaw, Jr. at a special ceremonial session of the Supreme Court of Florida. The current justices presided over the event in Orlando’s city council chambers.

Justice Shaw, who retired from the bench in January, was the first African American to serve as chief justice of the Supreme Court of Florida. He is the great-grandson of a slave and overcame tremendous obstacles during the era of segregation to become an attorney. He is a former professor at the original FAMU College of Law.

At the Orlando event Justice Shaw’s legal colleagues presented the case of his career. Among the speakers included historian Dr. Canter Brown Jr., former Florida A&M University president Dr. Walter L. Smith, and FAMU College of Law Dean Percy R. Luney, Jr.

The event included excerpts from a videotaped oral history with Justice Shaw, produced by the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society, which sponsored the event. The society’s programs are designed to preserve Florida’s judicial heritage.

What’s in a name?

Name the Newsletter

You can help us name the Florida A&M University College of Law newsletter. The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs would like to hear your ideas. The sender of the winning idea will receive a commemorative poster with images from the original and new law schools.

Send your newsletter title idea by September 1, 2003 to:

Bernadette Davis, Information & Publications Coordinator
bernadette.davis@famu.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 16 - 22: First-Year Orientation
August 25: First day of classes
September 30: New campus preview
Calling All College of Law Alumni!

We need your help to reconnect with FAMU College of Law alumni. The original law school graduated 57 students between 1954 and 1968. However, once the school was closed, there was no organization left to draw alumni together. Now that the College of Law has been reestablished in Orlando, we have an opportunity to bring the original alumni back together.

We are asking that graduates of the law school contact us. In addition to the graduates of the law school, the College of Law recognizes as its alumni the hundreds of FAMU graduates who have become attorneys after attending law school at other fine institutions.

If you know any of the members of the earlier classes or FAMU graduates who are attorneys, please pass this information on to them and ask that they provide us with current contact information, so that we can include them in College of Law events and information. Replies should be emailed to:

Mildred Graham
Director of Development & Alumni Affairs
mildred.graham@famu.edu.

Emergency Loans, Scholarship Funds Established

The College of Law has secured several key donations, including:

The GrayHarris Revolving Book Loan Fund

The GrayHarris Revolving Book Loan Fund will lend qualified students up to $300 to cover books. Students will reimburse the $5,000 fund within 10 days of receiving financial aid checks.

The SunTrust Banks of Florida Emergency Loan Fund

The SunTrust Banks of Florida Foundation has established an Emergency Loan Fund with a $50,000 contribution that will provide up to $1,000 to students eligible for financial aid or who experience a personal emergency or family crisis. Recipients will be required to reimburse the fund within 10 days of receiving financial aid or 60 days of receiving the loan.

Other recent College of Law donations include a $25,000 contribution to the general scholarship fund from Avis Rent-A-Car System, a $41,364.37 donation from James and Ann Stutz to establish the Holly Marie Stutz Memorial Scholarship Fund, and a $50,000 commitment from Parks & Crump, L.L.C. to endow a scholarship for FAMU graduates.

Among Jesse McCrary’s many honors and awards are the following: Outstanding Black Lawyer in American, National Bar Association (1981); Whitney Young Memorial Award, Greater Miami Urban League; Meritorious Achievement Award from Florida A&M University.

Alumni Spotlight: Jesse J. McCrary, Jr.

One of Florida A&M University’s most distinguished graduates is also an alumnus of the College of Law. Jesse J. McCrary, Jr. was born in Blitchton, Florida in 1937. His family moved to Ocala, Florida when he was five.

McCrary’s parents, Rev. and Mrs. Jesse McCrary, Sr., taught the values of integrity and honesty to all their children and Jesse built upon that foundation with his dreams of becoming a lawyer.

He graduated from FAMU in 1960 with a degree in political science. He demonstrated his sense of responsibility and vision early on as an organizer of the Tallahassee sit-ins in 1956. After graduation, McCrary was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army. After his honorable discharge he returned to FAMU to attend the College of Law. He received his J.D. in 1965 and went to work in the law office of Alcee Hastings in Fort Lauderdale.

In 1971 he established the law firm of McCrary, Ferguson, Lee, Culmer, Adderly and Long. He went on to become the first African-American to serve as an attorney for the Dade County Board of Public Instruction. Among his long list of “firsts” are the following accomplishments:


1969 – First African-American to argue before the United States Supreme Court on behalf of a Southern state.


Among Jesse McCrary’s many honors and awards are the following: Outstanding Black Lawyer in American, National Bar Association (1981); Whitney Young Memorial Award, Greater Miami Urban League; Meritorious Achievement Award from Florida A&M University.
Scholarship Honors Late FAMU Alumna Sara Simmons

Friends and family of the late Sara Simmons have established a scholarship endowment in her honor at the College of Law. Simmons, who earned a bachelor’s degree in Business from FAMU in 1967, passed away in 2001. She earned her J.D. at age 50 from Nova Southeastern University. She was a tireless worker in and outside the legal profession as a member of the National Bar Association, American Bar Association, The Florida Bar and as an officer of the National Bar Association Florida Chapter. She was active in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Links, Inc., M.O.V.E.R.S., Inc. and the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce.

The Sara Simmons Endowed Scholarship Fund will be awarded to a student returning to law school after a previous career, the path taken by Simmons. “Sara accomplished much in a short period,” said Evett Simmons, her sister and past president, National Bar Association. “She was a trailblazer, a teacher, a counselor, an entrepreneur, a community activist, a Christian and my best friend.”

Among the colleagues and friends who have donated to the fund are Arthenia Joyner, an alumna of the FAMU College of Law and member of the Florida House of Representatives, and attorney Daryl Parks, a graduate of FAMU.

The College of Law continues to accept donations to the Sara Simmons Endowed Scholarship Fund. To help, mail contributions to:

FAMU College of Law
One North Orange Avenue
Orlando, Florida 32801.

Banner Year for Inaugural Class

The Inaugural Class of the new law school wrapped up an exciting year with several spring and summer accomplishments. Students presented oral arguments in March and completed exams in April and May. In addition to their intense academic preparations, they held elections for the Student Bar Association and established the Percy R. Luney, Jr. Spirit of Service Awards, which were announced in April.

The officers of the SBA for 2003-2004 are: Carlos Woody, president; Leo Bobadilla, vice president; Sio-bhan Clancy, treasurer; Eileen Gongora, secretary; Michele Delaney and Ka’juel West, day class representatives; and Danielle Costanza, evening class representative.

Some of the students spent the summer months working as research assistants for faculty members or interning at local firms and other companies. Many students also attended summer classes, which were required for members of the Part-time Evening program. Students secured positions at Lockheed Martin, the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association, and other companies and agencies.

Wealth of Resources in Law Library

The College of Law library has an expansive collection for use by students and the Central Florida community. The collection includes federal and state case and statutory materials. The library’s holdings comprise the published papers of the NAACP, A. Philip Randolph, Mary McLeod Bethune and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

In addition, the library has the documentary civil rights papers of the following U.S. presidents: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Tru man, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon.

Researchers will find law reviews, bar journals, and books on constitutional law, environmental law, intellectual property, civil rights and human rights in the library. Five librarians and four staff members are available to offer research assistance to students and the public.
Prepare to join us for a preview of the new Florida A&M University College of Law campus in the Parramore neighborhood in downtown Orlando. Look for more details on the preview ceremony as the date draws closer. Or, contact the Office of Development & Alumni Affairs.

SAVE THE DATE

September 30, 2003

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http://www.famu.edu/law

THANK YOU!

We would like to thank FAMU President Dr. Fred Gainous, the Board of Trustees, FAMU administrators and faculty, alumni, local elected officials, and other supporters who have helped make the College of Law’s first year in Orlando a great success. Join us as the journey continues.

CREATING ONE FAMU